

GIS director requests help to pay for aerial photos

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Many people might not realize that the Lake County Geographic Information System Department's website is one of the most used resources in the county.

GIS Department Director Richard J. Kotapish delivered a presentation Monday about the services and made a pitch to the Lake County Mayors and City Managers Association, asking each community to contribute \$2,000 toward the cost for aerial photography recently shot over the entire county.

The aerial images will be updated for the first time in four years and much has changed since then, Kotapish said. In the past, images

were typically updated every two years.

But shrinking county revenues have extended the time period between the photography, which was conducted this spring by Rochester N.Y.-based Pictometry International Corp. for \$101,964.

The money for the contract will come from offices such as the county auditor, engineer, stormwater management department and contributions from communities.

"At this point, we're about 60 percent of the way there," Kotapish said when asked how many communities have contributed.

For the donation, these community governments will be able to see the more detailed angled pictometry that allows a better quality rather

More online

Lake County GIS Department Director Richard J. Kotapish gives his presentation.

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than traditional straight down images.

"These angled aerials are the ones that would be blocked off for communities that don't contribute," Kotapish said.

He said much of the GIS information available on other sites on the Internet is out-of-date and is displayed at lower resolutions, which makes zooming in on some images

difficult.

Safety and law enforcement agencies often use the county's GIS technology to plan tactical entry to battle fires, especially at night when they can't see well, in hazmat situations or for SWAT team entry, Kotapish said.

Dispatchers within the county rely on computerized maps to locate people and respond to an emergency.

A cellphone GPS chip can be used to help authorities find people in need of immediate assistance.

Building and planning departments can respond to inquiries without going out in the field, thus saving money, Kotapish said.

Illicit discharges and stormwater outfalls are mapped by the Lake

County General Health District and Lake County Stormwater Management Department.

The general public is able to view the more straight down view of property on the website, and they also can use the maps to zoom in on their parcels, see what their taxes are and make sure they aren't overdue, Kotapish said.

Homebuyers can look at a potential house and a neighborhood they might be considering.

Kotapish said the photography with the new aerial images should be rolled out next month or by early July.

For more information about the county GIS Department and its services visit, www.lakegis.org or call 440-350-5943.